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Culture, Norms and the Assessment of Communication Contexts:

Multidisciplinary Perspectives

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There is increasing acknowledgement by psychologists and interculturalists that the ways in which culture influences people's behaviour are likely to be affected by characteristics of the situation. Over 15 years ago, Smith (2003, p. 68) called for a greater focus on context, arguing: "If the context within which one works with a person from another culture elicits different types of behaviour, then cultural maps will be a poor guide to what happens in such circumstances. [...] a sharper focus on more specific settings, events and contexts and indeed the passage of time is needed." He recently (Smith, 2015, p. 1312) reiterated this call for greater attention to be paid to context. Others have made similar arguments. For example, Leung and Morris (2015) have proposed a 'situated dynamics framework' that incorporates the role of the situation and integrates values, schemas and norms in the culture-behaviour nexus. In line with this, researchers (Morris, Hong, Chiu, & Liu, 2015; Zou & Leung, 2015) have drawn attention to the importance of norms and the role they play in linking culture and behaviour. In terms of culture, Leung and Morris (2015, p. 1042) have further argued that the situation is an "integral part of culture because situations are nested within culture, and the influence of culture cannot be fully understood without considering the situation."

In this special issue we follow up on this trend from a multidisciplinary perspective, with a focus on contexts (especially communication contexts), the norms associated with people's assessments of those contexts, and their impact on behaviour. More specifically, we aim to introduce sociolinguistic/pragmatic perspectives and insights to move the debate forward. Our approach and perspective is thus very different from that of Zou and Leung (2015) in their special issue on intersubjective norms.

Our goal of gaining multidisciplinary insights into the culture–behaviour nexus by integrating concepts and findings from the different fields proved much more challenging than we initially anticipated. Concepts, terms, theoretical starting points, academic goals, and ‘acceptable’ research methodologies all turned out to be different, and researchers from the different disciplines (including within our editorial team!) sometimes had difficulty appreciating the perspectives and contributions of work from the ‘other’ discipline. It turned out to be an intercultural endeavour in its own right.

In this introduction, therefore, we not only introduce the articles in this special issue, but we attempt to explain the different conceptual approaches with social psychology and sociolinguistics/pragmatics to key facets of the culture–behaviour nexus, particularly context/situation, norms and behaviour. We start by considering the concepts of contexts and communicative situation.

Communication Contexts and the notion of Situation

The term ‘context’ has a very broad and general meaning and needs a modifier to indicate its approximate scope, such as historical context, economic context, linguistic context, and so on. In this special issue, we are focusing on the contexts that affect the co-production and co-interpretation of communicative behaviour. The notion of ‘situation’ is a very important facet of this, playing a central role in both social psychological and sociolinguistic/pragmatic theorising in terms of factors influencing behaviour.

Nevertheless, despite the centrality of the concept and the number of years that theorists have grappled with it, there is still little consensus over its conceptualisation (Rauthmann et al., 2014; Reis & Holmes, 2018; Wagerman & Funder, 2009). For example, Reis and Holmes (2018, pp. 71-72) have argued as follows:

Social psychology's long-standing interest in situations notwithstanding, there is no consensually accepted framework for identifying, classifying, or conceptualizing what situations are (and, by implication, what they are not). [...] In short, although the importance of situations to understanding behavior is beyond doubt; just how these situations should be conceptualized and organized remains ambiguous.

Hogan (2009, p. 249) makes the important point that "'situations' only matter if they are perceived by the individuals in them"; in other words, that the key issue is people's perceptions of situations – whether or not those perceptions are meaningful and impactful (Rauthmann et al., 2014). Hogan (2009) further argues that people's perceptions are a function of their own personalities, although others (e.g. Wagerman & Funder, 2009) argue for the importance of specifying situations independently of personality. In our view, culture can also potentially influence those perceptions as a result of socialisation influences. The various articles in this special issue explore this possibility from different angles.

In terms of the conceptualisation of the concept of situation, quite a lot of research was carried out on this in the 1970s and 1980s. Bond, Žegarac, and Spencer-Oatey (2000, p. 59) identified five dimensions that had been identified in the social psychological literature and linked them with sociolinguistic/pragmatic concepts (see below, for discussion of the latter):

- *Regulation/Scriptedness – Openness* (Marwell & Hage, 1970) can be related to *communicative activities*: some communicative activities are very regulated and scripted, others are much more open;
- *Visible (Public) – Private* (Marwell & Hage, 1970) has some links with *number of participants*;

- *Socio-emotional – Task-oriented* (Wish, D'Andrade, & Goodnow, 1980) can be related to sociolinguistic/pragmatic concepts such as the *interactional* vs *transactional* function of language (G. Brown & Yule, 1983; Spencer-Oatey, 2000a)
- *Cooperative – Competitive* (Wish et al., 1980) can be related to *rapport orientation* (Spencer-Oatey, 2000b, 2015)
- *Intense – Superficial* (Wish et al., 1980) can be related to goals and their relative importance to the individuals involved (cf. Hymes' (1972) concept of *Ends*).

In another article of the same year, McAuley, Bond, and Kashima (2000, p. 364) summarised the current understanding as follows:

There has been an array of approaches aimed at formulating structural frameworks for characterizing social interactions. [...] Summarizing across these diverse studies, a remarkably consistent pattern of results has emerged. Four dimensions appear repeatedly: an integrative dimension, commonly described as association-dissociation; a power or equality-inequality dimension; an activity dimension, conceptualized either as intensity or active hostility; and a regulation dimension, conceptualized as either formality-intimacy or task-social orientation.

Here they interpret the findings somewhat differently Bond et al. (2000), adding equality-inequality (power) and hinting at another dimension, distance-closeness (intimacy). In fact, these two variables have been particularly important in sociolinguistic/pragmatic research and they are referred to by several of the papers in this special issue (Choung, Takiura, and Kiyama, Buchtel and Guan, Vine, and Terkourafi).

Within social and cross-cultural psychology, the concept of situational strength (related to Marwell and Hage's notion of regulation/scriptedness – openness) has emerged as of central importance. Meyer, Dalal, and Hermida (2010) consider the construct space of situational strength and posit four facets: Clarity (the extent to which behavioural requirements are available and easy to understand), Consistency (the extent to which cues for behavioural requirements are consistent/compatible with each other), Constraints (the extent to which an individual's behaviour is limited by external forces), and Consequences (the extent to which decisions or actions have important positive or negative implications for any relevant person). Gelfand et al. (2011, p. 1101) have particularly focused on one of these facets, constraints, and have defined strong and weak situations as follows:

Strong situations have a more restricted range of appropriate behavior, have high censoring potential, and leave little room for individual discretion. Weak situations place few external constraints on individuals, afford a wide range of behavioural options, and leave much room for individual discretion.

In a major 33-nation cross-cultural study, she and colleagues explored (*inter alia*) the links between situational strength and tightness-looseness in societies as a whole (defined as the strength of social norms and tolerance of deviant behaviour in societal institutions) and found a significant relationship. One of the papers in this special issue, Stanley and Fischer, examines the impact of tightness-looseness (among other cultural variables) on behaviour.

Rauthmann et al. (2014, p. 689) take a somewhat different perspective and propose a working model of situation perception which identifies three types of observable situation cues: “(a) persons, relationships, communication, and interaction; (b) events, objects, and

activities; and (c) places.” This specification is closer to sociolinguistic/pragmatic perspectives, especially those within sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

Within sociolinguistic/pragmatics, two of the most comprehensive frameworks (as in social psychology) were developed in the 1970s: Brown and Fraser’s (1979) specification of the ‘components’ of situation and Hymes’ (1972) specification of the components of a speech event. Both of their frameworks have been highly influential in sociolinguistic/pragmatics, forming the foundation to a very large proportion of sociolinguistic/pragmatic research since then.

Brown and Fraser (1979, p. 34) define a situation as “the context within which interaction or ‘the speech event’ occurs”. They provide a comprehensive specification of all the elements that could play a role, which In Mischel and Shoda’s (1995) terms counts as a nominal (as compared with a psychological) description and which Rauthmann et al. (2014) refer to as situation cues. Brown and Fraser propose that there are two main (nominal) situational elements: the participants who are involved in the interaction and the scene in which it takes place. Each of these is broken down multiple times, with the interconnections shown in tree diagram format (see Figure 1).

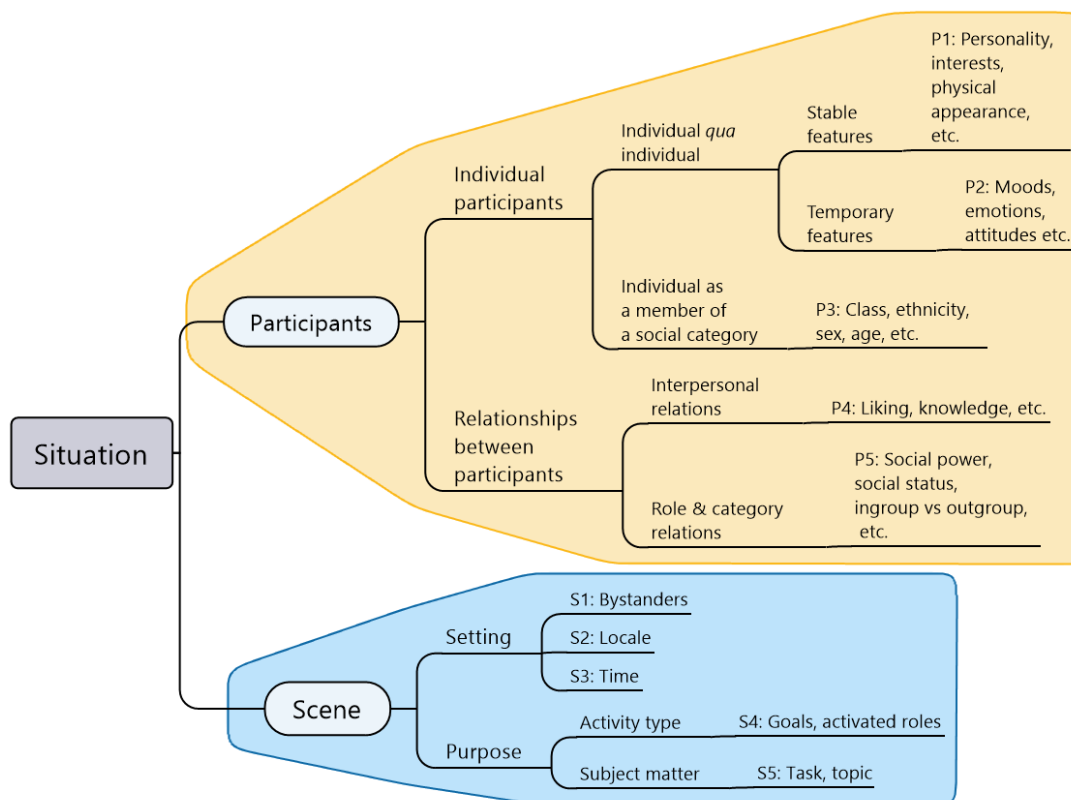


Figure 1. Components of the Situational Context, according to P. Brown and Fraser (1979, p. 35). (Figure redrawn and numbers added for ease of reference.)

Within cross-cultural and intercultural pragmatic research, participants' perceptions of relationships are regarded as particularly important, especially their role and category relations in terms of their relative power status (equal/unequal; typically referred to as P in pragmatics) and their degree of distance/closeness (typically referred to as D in pragmatics) (For a review of the impact of P and D variables on communication behaviour, see Spencer-Oatey & Žegarac, 2017). Despite this, there has been surprisingly little research into cultural differences in these areas, with very little unpacking of people's conceptions of the power, distance, and behavioural rights and obligations of given role relationships, either within or across social groups. Two of the articles in this special issue, Buchtel and Guan as well as Park, Lee, Westerman and Guan, address this issue. There is also little cross-cultural research

into the relative impact of P and D on communication decisions, or of the relative impact of the personal interests of the interlocutors (P1 in Figure 1). Choung and colleagues in this special issue explore this question.

A second highly influential model of situation was proposed by Dell Hymes (1972). His aim was to identify the key elements that need to be identified in any ethnography of communication (cf. Saville-Troike, 1982), and he proposed the mnemonic SPEAKING to summarise them (see Table 2). In many respects, this conceptualisation is not as detailed as that of Brown and Fraser (1979) but it has been widely used as a descriptive framework in linguistic anthropology (e.g. Saville-Troike, 1982). Interestingly, though, Hymes includes ‘norms’ within his framework, both interactional and interpretive. We return to that below.

Table 1

Hymes' Mnemonic SPEAKING to Summarise the Components that need describing in an Ethnography of Communication (Hymes, 1972, pp. 59-65)

S	Setting	Time and place of a speech act and in general, the physical circumstances
		Scene: The 'psychological setting' – the cultural definition of an occasion as a certain type of scene
P	Participants	Speaker or sender, addressee, hearer or receiver, audience
E	Ends	The purpose, goals and/or expected outcomes of a speech event
A	Act sequences	The form and content of the messages
K	Key	Tone, manner or spirit in which an act is done.
I	Instrumentalities	Channel: oral, written, or other medium of transmission
		Variety: dialect, register
N	Norms	Interactional norms: Specific behaviours and proprieties attached to speaker, e.g. that one must not interrupt.
		Interpretive norms: they implicate the belief system of a community
G	Genres	Categories such as poem, tale, proverb, prayer, lecture, editorial etc. The notion of genre implies the possibility of identifying formal characteristics.

When putting forward his framework, Hymes (1972) proposed nested units of analysis, including speech/communicative situation, speech/communicative event, and speech/communicative act. He explained this with the example that a party is a communicative situation, a conversation during the party is a communicative event, and that a joke within the conversation is a communicative act. He pointed out that the same type of speech act may recur in different types of speech events, and the same speech event may recur in different contexts of situation (Hymes, 1972, p. 56).

Other linguists have also proposed similar units of analysis to Hymes' concept of the communicative situation, one of the best known of which is Levinson's (1979) notion of activity type, which he explains as follows:

... a fuzzy category whose focal members are goal-defined, socially constituted, bounded, events with constraints on participants, setting, and so on, but above all on the allowable contributions. Paradigm examples would be teaching, a job interview, a jural interrogation, a football game, a task in a workshop, a dinner party, and so on.
(p. 368)

It is interesting to note here his use of the term 'constraints', which has clear parallels with the notions of situational strength and constraints discussed above. Unfortunately Levinson did not further develop his concept, although others (e.g. Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009; Thomas, 1995) have done so. Allwood (2000, 2007) has conceptualised this a little further, specifying key parameters for characterising social activities (see Table 2).

Table 2

Allwood's Communicative Activity Contextual Parameters

Parameter	Explanation
Purpose	The purpose and function of the activity, along with the associated procedures for achieving it.
Roles	The expectations (and sometimes formal requirements) which exist concerning the rights, obligations and competence needs that are associated with a given role in an activity.
Artifacts	The instruments, tools and media used to pursue the activity.
Environment	Includes both the social environment and the physical environment such as sound, temperature and furniture.

Allwood (2000) further explains that the type, purpose or function of an activity gives its rationale, and that typically procedures become established in order to facilitate the regular and smooth achievement of that purpose. Moreover, in order for the procedures to be carried out, there are standard activity roles, with associated rights and obligations which require an appropriate level of competence to fulfil them.

This conceptualisation seems to imply that people have schematic knowledge and expectations associated with the various parameters of communicative activities, and that purpose, procedures and roles are particularly important elements. A study by Marriott (1990) of an initial business negotiation meeting between an Australian producer and a potential Japanese buyer revealed the problems that can occur when interlocutors' have different schematic understandings and expectations of the same communicative activity. So, this raises some fundamental questions:

- In a given communicative activity (e.g. a welcome meeting for new business clients), to what extent do people from different cultural backgrounds hold similar or different conceptions of its purpose and the procedures expected for achieving them?
- In a given communicative activity, to what extent do people from different cultural backgrounds hold similar or different conceptions of who can (or should) say or do what, and when?

Three of the papers in this special issue take some first steps in addressing these questions, especially in relation to roles. Park et al. carry out a comparative study of American, Korean and Chinese conceptions of what it means to be a ‘team player; Buchtel et al. keep the setting (environment) and purpose constant, and examine the impact of change in role dyad (and associated power and distance relations) on conceptions of normative behaviour; and Vine focuses on one type of communicative activity (an internal business planning meeting) and examines how one particular individual changes his behaviour as his role changes.

Norms and Behaviour

In social psychology, norms have been of interest as determinants of behaviour for a long time (e.g., Krebs, 1970; Lewin, 1943; Triandis, 1977). Here, normative beliefs indicate the perception of social pressure from an important person or group of people (e.g., family, friends, or colleagues) to behave (or not) in a certain way in a given situation. Given that humans are social beings, it is not surprising to assume that what others think and do in a given situation has an impact on what oneself does in such a situation.

Specifically, and as outlined by Stanley and Fischer’s paper in this special issue, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991), one of the most influential models for predicting behaviour (e.g., Borsari & Carey, 2003; Smith-McLallen & Fishbein, 2008), posits that rather than a direct relation between norm and behaviour, perceived subjective norms

influence behaviours indirectly by way of behavioural intentions. That is, three components are proposed to predict behaviour through behavioural intentions: normative beliefs pertaining to a particular behaviour, attitudes toward the outcome of the particular behaviour and the value placed upon the outcome of a particular behaviour (behavioural beliefs), as well as the perceived degree of control over actually being able to engage in and complete the behaviour (control beliefs). In short, the TPB holds that favourable behavioural, control and normative beliefs will lead to intentions to engage in a given behaviour, which in turn leads to the actual expression of the given behaviour.

Yet, different definitions and operationalisations of norms led to a lack of consensus when and to what extent norms may influence behaviour. Today, social psychologists distinguish between descriptive and injunctive norms (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990). Descriptive norms refer to what one believes about how others typically behave in a given situation (the norms of “is”, previously also called popular norms). Thus, they inform about what is likely to be effective/adaptive behaviour in a given situation, providing decisional shortcuts for a person on what behaviour to adopt in a given situation (Cialdini, 1988). Injunctive norms refer to what people believe they should do (or not) in a given situation because important others approve (or disapprove) of it (the norms of “ought”, previously also called prescriptive or social norms). Consequently, “people adhere to injunctive norms out of moral emotions such as shame at wrongdoing” (Leung & Morri, 2015, p. 1033). In sum, “whereas descriptive norms inform behavior, injunctive norms enjoin it” (Cialdini, 2012, p. 297).

Consequently, TPB was updated into the Integrative Model of Behavioral Prediction (IMBP; Fishbein & Azjen, 2010; Fishbein, 2008; Fishbein & Yzer, 2003) which among other additions, now distinguishes between descriptive and injunctive norms. This has been demonstrated to be a crucial addition in understanding the norm-behaviour relationship. For

example, Ravis and Sheeran (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of descriptive norms across 18 studies, revealing in line with the TPB a significant relationship between descriptive norms and behavioural intentions when controlling for the other variables. More interestingly and in line with Stanley and Fischer's (this issue) findings, Manning's (2009) meta-analyses across 196 studies stressed that norms also directly influence behaviours, yet with descriptive norms showing a stronger relationship than injunctive norms.

But how do these two types of norms relate to each other? Morris and Liu (2015) propose that useful behaviour patterns that meet our needs (descriptive regularities), can become injunctive norms. That is, "(p)ractices that start purely as instrumental solutions become taken for granted and expected, leading to negative responses when the expectations are violated" (p. 1281). Notably, whether or not we deem something as a useful behaviour pattern in a given situation is influenced by descriptive norms (whether or not we observe important others to engage in this behaviour). Yet, how these two types relate to each other also depends on the level of importance associated with their respective reference group for a given behaviour in a given situation. For example, Manning (2009) demonstrated that injunctive and descriptive norms show a greater influence on behaviours when they are not approved by the larger society. In other words, we are more likely to engage in a particular behaviour that a proximal group (e.g., friends) approves and/or engages in although a more distal group (e.g., national group) disapproves of it.

But how to determine whether a particular reference group is perceived as important enough to influence one's behaviours through norms? Here the JCCP special issue on intersubjective norms (Zou & Leung, 2015) highlighted the work of Wan and colleagues (Wan, 2015; Wan, Chiu, Peng, Tam, 2007, Wan, Tam, & Chiu, 2010). They explored the relationship between an individual's endorsed cultural values and descriptive norms perceived to be held by a particular social group and its relationship with group identity and

behaviour. In particular, they asked participants to rate the extent to which a cultural value is important to them as well as the extent to which they believe the value is important for a member of their social group (i.e., descriptive norm). Then they identified those values with the highest collectively perceived importance for the cultural group as the intersubjective representation of the respective culture. Participants who then personally endorsed these values that are collectively perceived to be central for their group's culture (i.e., intersubjective norms) showed the highest level of identification with the respective cultural group. This model was supported across national cultures (Hong Kong Chinese and US Americans in the USA; Wan et al., 2007) and political cultures (e.g., republicans vs. democrats; Wan et al., 2010), with the latter also showing that stronger political identification with a particular party due to a high level of self-intersubjective norm alignment resulted in a higher likeliness to vote for the candidate from that party.

An alternative approach to better understand the relationship between injunctive norms and behaviours was re-introduced by Gelfand and colleagues (2011; Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006). Specifically, their concept of tight versus loose societies is based on the extent to which injunctive norms impose limitations on behavioural options through higher levels of punishment of norm deviant behaviour. Consequently, this framework proposes that loose rather than tight societies show a high level of tolerance towards behaviours that do not align with the respective injunctive norm for a given situation. As shown across national cultures (Gelfand et al., 2011.), states within the USA (Harrington & Gelfand, 2014), social classes (Gelfand, Harrington, & Jackson, 2017) and most recently across provinces in China (Chua, Huang, & Jin, 2019), this distinction is afforded by and reflected in historical and ecological threats as well as in the socialization by socio-political institutions (e.g., government, legal system, and religion). For example, societies with more natural disasters and fewer natural resources develop stronger injunctive norm adherence via sanctions to

coordinate behaviour that ensures the societies' survival of such threats. Meanwhile, a criminal justice system with more severe punishments (e.g., the death penalty) further reflects and dictates the tight range of permissible behaviour. This has implications at the individual level, with people living in tight cultures feeling more compelled to obey injunctive norms to avoid punishment, which in turn results in higher levels of psychosocial adaptation (e.g., higher levels in self-monitoring and stronger self-regulation).

Yet the question remains whether such a distinction is always required across situations and/or behaviours as well as whether other, specifically, more situation dependent determinants of the importance of a particular reference group/person define whether people are affected by normative beliefs at all. For example, in this special issue, Stanley and Fischer investigate both forms combined in relation to two different types of behaviours (exercise vs other). Buchtel and Guan asked participants to describe the injunctive norms for different social roles between two people when eating lunch at the same table in a restaurant. Choung and colleagues, Park and colleagues, as well as Vine and Terkourafi all focus on the influence of the type of behaviour and/or situational aspects (as described above) on whether or not participants would engage, are engaging or expect others to engage in a particular behaviour. Thus, the term 'normative' can apply here to the impact of both descriptive and injunctive norms. However, it should be noted that sometimes the term is used in a purely descriptive sense; for example, Buchtel and Guan (this issue) use it in this way, when drawing on the work of personality psychologists such as Furr (2008) and Rogers, Wood, and Furr (2018) and contrasting normative with distinctive.

Within sociolinguistics, a major focus has been on describing regularities in language behaviour and examining the impact of variables such as gender, age, and so on (e.g. see Holmes & Wilson, 2017; Tannen, 1990; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015); in other words, it has aimed at revealing descriptive norms and accounting for variation in language use. Within

pragmatics, a major branch of work has focused on politeness/impoliteness. Culpeper (2011), in his book on impoliteness, has distinguished between ‘habits’ and ‘social oughts’, referring to them respectively as ‘experiential norms’ and ‘social norms’. However, like Morris and Liu (2015), he argues that the former can easily develop into the latter. Since the study of politeness/impoliteness inevitably means a concern with social evaluation, most attention has actually been on injunctive norms (albeit not labelled as such), especially on the ‘rules’ or maxims for producing ‘polite’ behaviour and the ways that situational variables such as power and distance/closeness influence people’s choices. Classic works by linguists such as Brown and Levinson (1978/1987) and Leech (1983, 2014) have taken this approach (See Eelen, 2001, for a detailed discussion of norms and normativity in politeness theory). However, the production of polite (or impolite) behaviour is not only a matter of performance. It needs to be complemented by evaluation that is based on mutually shared (interpretive) norms. (Terkourafi, 2005, p. 249) explains this as follows:

To choose to be rude to you by using an offensive gesture, I must think that you are familiar with this gesture, and that you attribute to it the same negative value. In other words, I can only be rude to you in a way that you recognize as being rude. Otherwise, no matter how rude I think I am being, unless you concur with this evaluation, I have not been rude to you.

From a pragmatics perspective, this interpretation of the intended interactional meaning (technically known as its illocutionary force – an insult, in this example) is known as uptake. Terkourafi (this issue) refers extensively to this concept, arguing that evidence of uptake is needed if we are to claim that interlocutors have shared norms.

This brings us to the issue of behaviour: what is meant by behaviour and how data on it can best be collected. There seem to be further disciplinary differences here. Let us consider the act of greeting a line manager at work. This could be viewed from three angles:

1. Behavioural obligation (i.e. injunctive norm):
 - Whether or not a subordinate should greet a line manager
 - Socially acceptable forms (i.e. wordings) of greeting for a line manager
2. Behavioural pattern (i.e. descriptive norm)
 - Whether the subordinate regularly greets his/her line manager
 - The wording of the greeting the subordinate usually uses
3. Behavioural instantiation (i.e. behavioural performance)
 - What the subordinate actually says on each occasion

Traditionally in both psychology and pragmatics, researchers have gathered self-report data, which basically probes (2) and sometimes also asks about (1). However, for language use, it is notoriously difficult to remember exactly what one actually said on a given occasion, and pragmatic studies (e.g. Golato, 2003; Turnbull, 2001) that have compared self-report with actual interactional data have found noticeable differences. Kasper (2008, p. 294) thus concludes that “The comparative research supports the view that DCTs [Discourse Completion Tasks] and other questionnaire formats elicit intuitional data rather than data on language use and behaviour.” In other words, from a linguistic perspective, questionnaire formats elicit schematic knowledge about language use (and maybe behaviour more generally) and not necessarily information on actual language use. This schematic or meta-knowledge is extremely important and valuable as it underpins all language production and interpretation. However, it is not identical to actual language use and so the collection and analysis of authentic discourse is extremely important to linguists. Two of the articles in this special issue, by Vine and by Terkourafi, thus take this approach.

Articles in the Present Issue

The first contribution to this special issue, by Stanley and Fischer, explores the potential impact of cultural dimensions and ecological factors on norm effects across different contexts. They point out that most psychological research to date, especially cross-cultural comparative work, has treated norms as relatively abstract and content-free, and that there are several potential limitations to this. These include the possibilities that norms may operate differently across cultural groups, that norm effects may vary across different behavioural domains, and/or that norms may be affected by situational context. Using a meta-analysis approach, they explore the first two of these issues and investigate the extent to which individualism/collectivism, cultural tightness/looseness, monumentalism/flexibility, and wealth affect the strength of norm-behavioural intention and norm-behaviour relationships across national cultures. In other words, they take a macro level interpretation of context. In terms of the behavioural domain, they have two contrasting categories: physical exercise and ‘other’ (e.g. health-related behaviour). They found significant effects for both aspects and recommend that future research investigates in greater detail the situation and the behavioural specificity of norms across different cultural contexts. By stressing that norms might be focused on specific behaviours, they extend Leung and Morris’ (2015) situated framework, which only considers behavioural tasks as activators of norms with social implications (e.g., drafting a public announcement with implications beyond the individual, p. 1041).

With regard to the behavioural domain, Stanley and Fischer were restricted by the behaviours investigated in the meta-analytic studies that were available to them. The other articles in this special issue have taken a different approach and have started at the schematic and/or behavioural levels. In our second contribution to the special issue, Choung and colleagues have chosen invitation decision-making as their focus. Their study is situationally

based in that it manipulates two of the variables that Brown and Fraser (1979) identified: locus of interest and interpersonal relations (P1 and P5 in Fig.1). They created a questionnaire with three scenarios: in one scenario both speaker and hearer were identified as interested in an event, in another the speaker was said to be more interested than the hearer, and in the third scenario the hearer was depicted as more interested than the speaker. For all three scenarios, participants were asked to imagine themselves as the speaker and to make a decision as to whether to invite the hearer to join them in the specified activity, whether to do it alone, or whether not to do it at all. For each situational context, they selected one of these three possible responses for two types of hypothetical same-sex hearer: familiar friend and unfamiliar but favoured classmate. Respondents from Japan and Korea completed the questionnaire, and Choung and colleagues conducted two types of analyses on the data. Firstly, they investigated whether there were national-level differences in people's invitation decision-making behaviour in each of the scenario conditions. Then they used classification tree modelling for each cultural group respondents to explore the relative importance of the two situational context variables in influencing people's behaviour. They found significant differences in both sets of analyses, thereby offering support for Stanley and Fischer's argument that behavioural norms among members of different cultural groups may be differentially influenced by situational variables.

Our third contribution to this special issue, by Buchtel and Guan, again takes a situational context orientation. Their study focuses on the injunctive norms associated with behaviour between different role dyads. They used a scenario design in which 16 different types of role pairs (e.g. business partners, grandfather/grandson, boss/secretary) were interacting in a neutral setting (eating lunch at the same table in a casual restaurant). In other words, they kept the scene constant (S1-4 in Figure 1) and manipulated the role relations in terms of power (P) and distance (D) (P4 & P5 in Figure 1). They used Likert scales to check

that the participants were interpreting the P and D relations of the dyads as anticipated, and they asked both Chinese and US American respondents to list 2-4 things that one of the dyad pairs ‘should’ do or say in that context. They then used the concept of normative and distinctive behaviour (cf. Furr, 2008; Rogers et al., 2018) to explore the extent to which expected behaviour is (a) role-specific and (b) influenced by national culture. They also explored the content of the injunctive norms for the different roles, using Spencer-Oatey’s (e.g. 2008, 2015) rapport management framework, identifying the top ten more normative and most distinctive behaviours per cultural group. Once again, they found that situation (in terms of the P and D of role relations) had a significant impact on the injunctive norms that all respondents held, but that this effect was greater for Chinese respondents than for US Americans. They also found that the content of the injunctive norms for appropriately managing the P and D of the role relations were often noticeably different.

Our fourth paper in this special issue, Park and colleagues, also explores norms associated with role relations. Park and her colleagues were interested in finding out how US American, Chinese and Korean respondents conceptualise the different traits or behaviours that constitute being a ‘team player’: how similar or different their conceptualisations are, and any national cultural differences in emphases between task and social behavioural responsibilities. Their questionnaire comprised one open-ended question and nine trained coders (three from each of the language groups) independently coded the answers. They found that although broadly the same behaviours were attributed to a ‘team player’ by all three national cultural groups (in other words, they all held broadly similar descriptive norms), there were noticeable differences between Korean and Chinese respondents in the relative proportion of task versus social responsibilities listed, with (somewhat surprisingly) Korean respondents listing more task responsibilities than Chinese and US American respondents did. They recommend, therefore, that in multicultural workplaces, managers and

peers should explicitly discuss what being a team player might mean to members from different cultures, in order to reduce the risk of misunderstanding.

Our fifth contribution to this special issue, by Vine, explores the situational context from yet another angle and with a very different methodological approach. Vine drew on the database of audio recordings (and associated transcriptions) of workplace communication collected by the Wellington Language in the Workplace Project (LWP). This project has run for several years and has been analysing communication behaviour in Māori (ethnically indigenous New Zealanders) and Pākehā (ethnically white New Zealanders of European-descent) led workplaces, identifying key similarities and differences, and the ways these relate to underlying cultural values such as hierarchy/egalitarianism and to communication styles, such as formality/informality. Vine selected a series of business meetings from the database, keeping constant the activity type and its organisational setting (a business meeting in a Māori workplace) (S1–5 in Figure 1). She also kept constant a particular individual (P1–3 in Figure 1), Caleb, who participated in those business meetings in that same company. In each of the meetings, which were attended by mostly the same colleagues, Caleb took on slightly different roles (P4 in Figure 1): as a team member in Meeting 1, as chair in Meeting 2, and as chair and acting CEO in Meeting 3. Vine analyses features of his participation behaviour (e.g. levels of formality in language use, levels of proactive verbal participation, and degree of attention to relational consideration) in each of these meetings. She demonstrates how in certain respects his communication behaviour changes across meetings, in line with the changes in his role in the meeting, but how in other senses he retains characteristic Māori communication characteristics that align with Māori values of hierarchy, collectivism, and *whanaungatanga* (close connection between people). In this way, Vine demonstrates through the analysis of authentic interactional data how people can show both consistency in their role enactment, while also showing important variation in line with

situational changes in the meeting-specific role; in other words, the influence of both local situational factors and ethnic-group level values.

Our sixth and final article in this special issue, by Terkourafi, also uses spoken conversation as data, but aims to outline a methodological approach that demonstrates how the interpretation of particular (linguistic) behavioural patterns is linked with co-variation in contextual variables. In other words, Terkourafi's aim is to propose a methodological approach that, for a given community of practice (Wenger, 1998), can identify the interconnections between frequently used (linguistic) behavioural features (i.e. descriptive behavioural norms) on the one hand and certain features of the situational context on the other. Fundamental to Terkourafi's argument is the notion that meaning interpretation is not a straightforward matter of decoding words, but rather entails inferencing, through drawing on various features of the linguistic and extra-linguistic context. For instance, if someone says 'it's hot today', we need information about who said those words in what kind of context in order to infer whether it was intended as friendly small talk, a request to open a window or be offered a cold drink, or something else. The more frequently a given linguistic pattern occurs in a particular set of contextual circumstances, the easier, faster and more accurate the inferencing. Terkourafi's end-goal is to contribute a methodological approach in relation to frequently repeated activities (e.g. requests, apologies, greetings) that can reveal the norms for their performance and how those norms can vary when key features of the situational context change. This is important because it is the pairing of a frequently occurring behavioural pattern with features of the situational context that facilitates interpretation of meaning, yet those pairings can vary across communities of practice and hence lead to intercultural misunderstandings. Terkourafi argues that not all of the elements of the situational context depicted in Figure 1 are necessarily relevant to identifying those pairings and introduces the notion of 'minimal contexts' with respect to this.

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